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WITTY RETORTS OF POLITICIANS.

By E. J. MOYLE.

THE impromptu reply,' said Molière, 'is precisely the touchstone of the man of wit.'

If we except the Irish members of Parliament, who belong to a race always noted for their quickness of retort, and one or two English politicians who can always be relied upon to hold their own, our modern legislators are not, as a body, particularly blessed in the power of repartee. The gift of momentarily turning the tables on an aggravating interrupter is possessed only by a few. This is to be regretted, for even the palate of a hostile audience is invariably tickled with a smart reply, whether it take the form of an ill-natured sting or a good-tempered joke, and very frequently a threatening meeting is transformed thereby into a tolerant one. In bygone days the method of election lent itself admirably to a free display of banter. The candidate upon the hustings on nomination day was invariably assailed with embarrassing questions, and his ultimate success or failure depended in no small measure upon his ability to hurl back a stinging retort to a carefully-considered interrogation.

The Prime-Ministers of this century have been singularly gifted in the art of repartee. Even those unable to boast of having had their wits sharpened by warmly-contested elections have known how to strike home when the occasion presented itself. Take, for example, the courteous yet crushing reply of the Duke of Wellington to the Austrian princess who asked him how he accounted for the fact that the Viennese spoke French far better than did the English. 'Madam,' said his Grace, 'if Napoleon had twice visited London with his armies, as he has Vienna, we should doubtless be much more familiar with the French language.' More stinging was the same statesman's retort when Louis-Philippe introduced to the Duke one of the French Marshals he had defeated in the Peninsula, and who, with a lack of manners strangely foreign to his nation, partly

turned his back on his old enemy during the presentation. The king apologised for his officer's rudeness. 'Forgive him, sire,' exclaimed the Iron Duke, with a laugh. 'Why, it was *I* who taught him to do that in the Peninsula.'

One would hardly look, perhaps, for an exhibition of this gift of repartee in a person of the temperament of Lord Melbourne; yet the following retort to Mr Black, then editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, shows that the Viscount was not a whit behind his illustrious Tory predecessor in this respect. The Government of which he was the head was daily being severely attacked in the columns of the *Chronicle*, when Lord Melbourne casually met Mr Black in the Strand, and each inquired for the other's health. Mr Black complained that he had been suffering from a bad cold. 'Ah, Mr Black!' said the Premier, 'you have been *lying* on damp sheets.'

It was just about this time—in 1835—that Mr Disraeli, fresh from defeats at High Wycombe, but in no way discouraged, journeyed down to Taunton to oppose Mr Henry Labouchere. This contest, which was destined to become the turning-point in the young politician's career, was made additionally interesting by the attack delivered by the Tory candidate on Mr O'Connell, and which nearly resulted in a duel. Feeling in the little Somerset town ran very high on both sides, and personalities were freely indulged in. While Disraeli was walking along the Parade one day during the contest, fantastically arrayed, and followed by an alternately cheering and jeering crowd, an excited politician rushed from his shop, pointing the finger of scorn at him, and exclaimed reproachfully, 'A Jew! a Jew!' Disraeli was quite equal to the occasion. Turning suddenly round and facing his antagonist, he coolly replied, with a quiet smile, 'No. Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile.' It was the same statesman who crushed an opponent anxious to know 'on what [programme] he stood,' by retorting, 'I stand on my head, sir.' Later in life,

when the summit of his ambition had been reached, Lord Beaconsfield was constantly pestered by a Yorkshire manufacturer addicted to boasting of his wealth. 'Look at me,' said the bore one day. 'I made myself.' 'Then you took a great responsibility off the shoulders of the Creator,' was the stinging, if not original, retort.

It may not be altogether out of place here to recall the delightfully courteous reply made by Sir William Harcourt while dining one evening with Mr Disraeli. It happened that on the occasion in question Mr Harcourt—as he was then—was placed next to the hostess. On the wall opposite them hung a picture of a lightly-draped female figure, and during a pause in the conversation the guest's eyes happened to wander to the painting. 'I see you are looking at that picture,' suddenly broke in Mrs Disraeli, with a laugh. 'I always say that it oughtn't to be allowed in here; but it is nothing to the Venus that Mr D. has in his bedroom.' 'That I can quite believe,' replied the Squire of Malwood gallantly, with a bow, and feeling that he had ventured on rather delicate ground, quickly changed the subject. Later in the evening the incident was related to the host, who laughed heartily at the neat reply of his political opponent.

To return to the Premiers, we find that Lord Palmerston, in making sarcastic use of the Psalms, had the tables turned on him in a disastrous manner by Bishop Wilberforce. Peer and prelate were staying at a country-house, and when Sunday came 'Pam' offered the Bishop a lift to the neighbouring church. The latter declined, and proceeded on foot, but was overtaken by the rain. When Lord Palmerston passed him in his carriage he mockingly said:

'How blest is he who ne'er consents
By ill advice to walk!'

to which Wilberforce promptly replied:

'Nor stands in sinners' ways, nor sits
Where men profanely talk.'

It was not often that Palmerston was thus beaten, for no politician was ever subjected to more rigorous heckling than was the Liberal Premier by his constituents at Tiverton, his great antagonist being a local butcher named Rowcliffe. The ingenious method adopted by 'Pam' under fire is well instanced by the following report of a reply to a question by an opponent whether he would support or oppose a certain measure. 'I will'—(loud Tory cheers)—'not'—(great Liberal applause)—'pledge myself'—(uproar)—'until the details are before me'—(general cheering).

A very different line, but not less effective, was that adopted by Mr Gladstone when he contested Newark at the request of the Duke of Newcastle, the registered owner of the borough. A matter-of-fact elector asked the young candidate whether he was or was not the Duke of Newcastle's nominee? This was an exceedingly embarrassing question. If

the candidate said 'No,' he would be convicted, within every man's knowledge, of a falsehood. If he said 'Yes,' nomination and poll were both a farce. Mr Gladstone rose to the occasion, and extricated himself from the difficulty by asking the honourable elector to do him the favour of defining the term 'nominee.' The unwary elector fell into the trap, and Mr Gladstone was, of course, able to declare that in such a sense he was *not* the duke's nominee.

At the celebrated election in 1865, at which Mr Gladstone lost his seat for Oxford University, his opponent was Mr Gathorne Hardy. In those days the practice was for each elector to record his vote by word of mouth before the tellers for each party. The late Professor Henry Smith was acting as teller for Mr Gladstone, when an uncouth country clergyman entered, and to the usual request for whom he wished to record his vote, replied in his confusion, 'I vote for Mr Glad—I mean for 'Ardy.' 'I claim that vote,' quietly put in Professor Smith. 'No, no,' protested the clergyman; 'I did not finish the name.' 'Quite so; but you did not even begin the other,' retorted the professor. The rejoinder of the youthful Harrow politician concerning the Liberal statesman deserves mention. The scene was at Lord's cricket-ground, and Eton had just received defeat at the hands of their rivals. Harrovians were naturally elated, and cheered vigorously. This annoyed an Etonian, who sarcastically remarked to a partisan of the victors, 'Well, you Harrow fellows needn't be so beastly cocky. When you wanted a headmaster you had to come to Eton to get one.' For a moment the Harrovian was nonplussed; but, pulling himself together, he blurted out, 'Well, at any rate, no one can say that *we* ever produced a Gladstone.'

Leaving the greater political lights and coming to the rank and file, many instances can be cited in which a candidate has been able to use to great advantage his power of repartee. The late Sir Henry Havelock, while addressing a boisterous meeting of his constituents in the south-east division of Durham, met with a hostile reception, one elector expressing his disapproval by throwing a rotten egg at the candidate. Fortunately it missed the speaker, and was smashed on the wall at his back. There was a momentary pause; then Sir Henry said in his brusque way, 'I say, my friend, the hen that laid that egg must have had very bad breath.' The effect of this good-tempered rejoinder was electrical; the meeting cheered the candidate for some moments, and gave him a respectful hearing during the remainder of his speech. Less fortunate in the matter of aim, but quite as happy in retort, was Charles Burleigh the Abolitionist, who in the midst of an anti-slavery speech was struck full in the face by a rotten egg. 'There's a proof,' he said as he calmly wiped his face with his handkerchief—'a proof of what I have always

maintained, that pro-slavery arguments are very *unsound*.' The crowd laughed heartily, and Burleigh was allowed to speak without further molestation. A similar incident occurred at a political meeting in the west of England, but on this occasion it was a cabbage which found its way to the platform. The orator retorted that some of his flattering supporters had declared him to be a powerful speaker, but he little thought that any of his hearers would ever lose their heads over him. Coleridge once dealt in a crushing manner with a hissing audience. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'you hiss, and I am not surprised at it. What can you expect when the cold waters of reason come into contact with red-hot fanaticism but a hiss?'

A candidate for a rural constituency who appeared very nervous was requested by an elector at the back of the room to speak up. 'Speak up!' he retorted in a voice which filled the building and surprised all present. 'I should have thought that the ears of the gentleman who interrupted were long enough to hear me even at that distance.' Not less telling was the reply of Wilberforce at the St James's Hall to a similar request. 'Speak up!' he said. 'Yes, I intend to speak up, for I refuse to speak down to the level of the ill-mannered person who interrupted me.'

A repatee which has been fastened on a number of youthful candidates—amongst others the Marquis of Carmarthen when he, then twenty-five years of age, first contested Brixton; Mr Ivor Guest, on being introduced by Sir Edward Clarke to the electors of Plymouth; and Mr Winston Churchill at Oldham—is one in reply to the idiotic question, 'Does your mother know you're out?' the inference being that the candidate is too young for the high honour he is seeking. The retort is in every case the same: 'Yes, sir; and what is more, when the poll is declared my mother will know that I am in.' Speaking of Mr Winston Churchill, now a member of Parliament, his definition of a candidate deserves to live: 'A man who is asked to stand, wants to sit, and is expected to lie.' Mr Bennet Burleigh, the famous war correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*—a paper with which he has been so long and honourably connected—was in 1885 Radical candidate for the Govan division of Lanarkshire. He was subjected to much heckling, but he more than held his own, to the great delight of his supporters. At a meeting of the workers in the shipyard of the late Sir William Pearce, the Conservative candidate, one of the men, a Liberal, wanted to know why Mr Burleigh, if he were an honest Radical, wrote for the *Daily Telegraph*. 'Just for the same reason,' replied Burleigh, 'as you, another honest Radical, work in the yard of a Conservative shipbuilder.' The heckler collapsed, amidst roars of laughter.

During an election contest in the West End of London, a candidate was greeted with the

remark, 'What have *you* done for the constituency?' It so happened that the gentleman questioned was a lawyer who had—in the fullness of his heart and, his opponents averred, with one eye on the forthcoming election—made it his practice to give gratuitous advice daily to constituents in legal difficulties. Before the candidate had time to reply, the meeting was surprised by a working-man rising in the body of the hall and exclaiming, 'What has Mr — done for us? Why, for one thing, he has brought me and my old woman here together again—ain't he, Sarah?' With this the grateful elector bent down and gave his forgiving spouse, who was seated beside him, a kiss which resounded throughout the building. The incident caused roars of laughter and much cheering, and was probably unique in the annals of electioneering. When 'Charlie' Russell, the late Lord Chief-Justice, was contesting South Hackney, a constituent, in the course of his canvass, asked Sir Charles what the penalty was for bigamy. 'Two mothers-in-law,' retorted the famous lawyer. In a recent contest a speaker was much annoyed by the interruption caused by two crying infants who had been brought to the meeting by their parents. The orator bore it patiently for a little while, but at length stopped in his address and said, 'There are some things in this hall like good resolutions—they *should be carried out*.' This witty remark had the desired effect, and the causes of the disturbance were removed.

It must not be imagined that the victory always rests with the speaker, for very frequently the politician comes to grief at the hands of the electors, and when this is the case no situation can be more galling. Quite recently, at a Conservative meeting, a gentleman who had been invited by the local executive to lay his views before the electors, with the prospect of becoming the adopted candidate, declared, in vindication of his devotion to truth, that when a boy he had been thrashed by a mistaken father for telling it. It was an ill-mannered opponent who, having somehow crept into the meeting, briskly replied, 'I reckon it cured yer, guv'nor.' At a Primrose League gathering at Newton Abbot, in Devon, a 'working-man orator' advocated the desirability of paying a good price for everything. 'Cheap labour is no good; cheap tools are no good; cheap watches are no good. You can take it from me,' he continued, 'that a safe and sure motto is, "What is cheap is no good." If you think you will forget it, write it down and stick the paper in your hat.' A man at the back of the hall inquired how much it cost to join the local Habitation of the League. The imported orator asked the chairman, who mentioned the sum, which turned out to be a few pence. 'What is cheap is no good; if you think you will forget it, write it down and stick the paper in your hat,' mercilessly retorted the Radical interrupter. A candidate for an agricultural constituency, while

canvassing, fared little better. Noticing one of the electors ploughing, he approached him and said, 'That seems to be very light soil. What crops do you grow on it?' 'Depends very much on the kind o' seeds we puts in,' replied Agricola dryly.

On the other hand, a vote is frequently secured by the happiness of a retort. At one of the houses at which a candidate called he was encountered by a bullying opponent, who declared with vehemence, 'I would sooner vote for the devil himself than for you.' 'I have not the slightest doubt of it, my dear sir,' said the candidate quietly; 'but in the event of your friend not coming forward, may I count on your vote?' No vote was ever more smartly earned or thoroughly deserved. A resourceful, though it is to be feared mercenary, politician in humble circumstances put money in his pocket at an election by a witty reply. He tried, unsuccessfully, to sell a number of kittens bedecked with Tory colours. The next day the same animals appeared adorned with Liberal favours. 'Why,' said some one, 'they were Tories yesterday.' 'Yes,' he said, 'but their eyes have opened now, and they have become Liberals.' The vendor's wit enabled him to dispose of his feline wares.

It is from individuals possessing similar gifts that emanate those telling retorts which one continually hears in a crowd. At an open-air political meeting in the north of England a man cried, 'Hurrah for Jackson!' to which a bystander replied sarcastically, 'Hurrah for a Jackass!' 'All right, my friend,' exclaimed the first speaker, 'you can hurrah for your candidate, and I'll do the same for mine.' All electors are not so gifted, as the following experience of a canvasser in Devonshire clearly indicates. 'Whom are you voting for, my good fellow?' he asked. 'I votes for the lady.' 'But there is no lady candidate standing.' 'Well,' replied Hodge, 'Poll Early's name comes on my voting-paper before the names of the two men, and I thought I'd vote for her—see?'

Before taking leave of this subject of witty retorts, it would be unfair to close without including a few specimens of repartee culled from the electoral contests of our brethren across the sea. In a New Zealand town one of the candidates, a pronounced Scotsman, had received a

present of a huge thistle, which at the moment happened to be lying on the table of his committee-room. A friend, suddenly entering, at once withdrew, with the remark, 'I beg your pardon! I didn't know you were at lunch.' This indirect reference to the animal usually associated with thistle-eating recalls a witty speech made by the Hon. Joseph Choate before he received his appointment as Ambassador to the Court of St James. While still an active politician on the Republican side, he was on one occasion following Mr Richard Croker round the country on the stump, and thus dealt with the Tammany chief's address: 'Croker's speech,' said Mr Choate, 'reminds one of the familiar story of Balaam's ass. Until the ass spoke nobody in the world imagined what a perfect ass he was. If he had not spoken he would have passed into history as an average, ordinary, silent ass who carried Balaam on his way; but when he spoke he was distinguished over all other asses in the land.' Far less acrimonious was the same gentleman's happy remark when, during an after-dinner speech, he glanced up at a gallery filled with ladies, and exclaimed, 'Now I understand what the Scripture phrase means, "Thou makest man a little lower than the angels."' Senator Hoare, of the American Congress, is one of the wittiest as well as one of the most learned men in public life. Not long ago he was joined in the corridor of the Capitol by a former colleague in the Senate, and as they neared the entrance to the chamber Mr Hoare motioned his companion to pass in first. 'After you,' said the ex-senator, drawing back. 'No, indeed,' retorted Senator Hoare; 'the X's always go before the wise.'

Instances might be multiplied in which brilliant repartees have been exchanged on the spur of the moment; many doubtless will recur to the reader as these lines are glanced through. It is impossible to tell, in many cases, who is the actual author of the retort quoted, for politicians are, in the language of one of them, proverbially 'indebted to their memory for their wit.' However obtained, it is to be hoped that courteous retorts will ever be part and parcel of political gatherings, the monotony of which they do so much to enliven.

OUR LADY OF DELIVERANCE.

CHAPTER XXIX.—THE END OF THE BEGINNING.



OUR own wedding had been of the hastiest. We made up for it in the enjoyment of the wedding of our two good friends Jeanne Thibaud and Louis Vard, and Denise entered into it with all the exuberance of enjoyment which most girls find greater vent for in other people's wed-

dings than in their own. In my lack of understanding, I had suggested that the merrymakings should take place at the Château, and I supposed that the proposal would be considered a flattering one to our friends. But Denise, who knew her people, negatived it at once.

'It wouldn't do for a moment,' she said; 'they wouldn't enjoy themselves the least little bit.

They would try to be on their good behaviour, and all the fun would be gone. There is only one place to dance in at a Breton wedding, and that's in a barn; and we'll have the biggest barn up at La Garaye, and you shall see them dance till they can't stand. Oh! it's a great time is a wedding, I assure you—unless you have it on a ship,' she added mischievously, 'and have to be married in somebody's clothes—which is not exactly the very pleasantest kind of a wedding, I know.'

'Yes,' I said, 'I felt very sorry for you. Next time you shall have it in a barn.'

The following day almost the whole village streamed away over to Bessancy, and Jeanne and Louis were duly married in the church there, Père Bonnat helping to tie the knot tight.

Vaurel was there quite *un grand seigneur* in the new clothes which he had bought at Paris at the sign of 'Old England.' And old man Goliot was there in the new clothes which Vaurel had bought for him at the same place. He was still in a state of great excitement over his Parisian experiences, and found it difficult to settle down to the humdrum life of Cour-des-Comptes; but Vaurel was looking after him.

And Boulot was there in his new brass collar with the blunt spikes, and a big white cotton bow tied on the back of his neck to counteract in some degree the militant look of the collar, and to bring him into line with the festivity of the occasion.

His sheepishly knowing look as he sat on his stump in the church porch, with his head hanging forward between his shoulders and the big cotton bow cocking up behind, set us all laughing, and he wrinkled up his nose at us and sneezed furiously three times, and then rolled desperately on his back, kicking and wriggling vigorously in a vain attempt to get rid of his decoration. Then he got up and sat down again despondently, and said as plainly as words, 'I just did that to show that I didn't put that silly thing on myself. It was that dear old fool Prudent who tied it on. You must excuse him; he's been a little bit off his head since I took him round the world and up to Paris. But he'll come round all right in time if you leave him alone. He's the best-hearted fellow in the world, you know; but he's a bit raised just now. However, I'm looking after him, so you don't need to worry yourselves.'

During the ceremony we heard a loud sneeze which was very familiar to us, and there was Boulot, tired of waiting outside, coming sauntering up the aisle. He looked round on us all with extreme deliberation, winked as his eye caught mine, wagged his stump at sight of Louis and Jeanne kneeling by the railings, then smiled knowingly, and sat down alongside

them, surveying the proceedings with all the grace of a heavy uncle, and sneezing again at the incense, of which he disapproved.

The chorister-boy who was waving the censer was a little rascal, and gave him a special whiff all to himself, which started him sneezing more violently than ever. The two priests looked at him. Father Bonnat's eyes twinkled merrily, and he leered benevolently back at them, just as the heavy uncle might have done had he been slightly uplifted with the hilarity of the occasion. A verger in a cloak hurried up, carrying a long wand. Boulot sneezed and smiled, and I could almost hear him say:

'Well, old cock, what part of the show are you, and how much longer is all this nonsense going to last? Say, tell that little boy in the long shirt that if he throws any more of that stinking stuff at me I'll come through and bite a piece out of his leg. Some folks may like it, but—a-ti-shoo!—a-ti-shoo!—a-ti-shoo!—it gets up my nose and makes me sneeze. Want a word with me, do you, old boy? All right; what is it?' and he took a heavy step or two towards the verger, smiling with his eye-teeth all the time, and the verger as soon as he saw him in motion thought better of it, and beat a rapid retreat down the aisle.

However, the ceremony was got through all right, and Boulot led us all back to Cour-des-Comptes in triumph, Denise and Jeanne in the family carriage, and the rest of us on foot. Such a gay company of broad-brimmed beavers and handsomely smocked blouses, and snowy flapping headgear, and swinging short blue skirts and neat ankles, and seamed and weather-tanned old faces, and young faces like rosy apples, and joyous voices that called to and fro, and shrieked with laughter at infinitesimal jokes.

And so along the dappled high-road, with the poplars waving and shimmering on each side of it, and through the green fields to the big barn at La Garaye, where the long trestle tables were groaning beneath the weight of a mighty feast.

Here Denise bade them all wait while she went inside to see that everything was right; and they gathered round Louis and Jeanne, joking and chaffing them to their hearts' content with a humour as broad as it was homely; and if, now and again, their sallies brought the colour into the bride's cheeks, it was all part of the fun of the day, and only what you have to expect when you get married in Cour-des-Comptes.

Then Denise pushed open the great swinging doors, and they all flocked in out of the spring sunshine, and rushed for the tables like so many children, exclaiming aloud at the quality and quantity of the fare.

Jeanne and Louis occupied the places of honour of course, and on the table in front

of Jeanne was a plate covered by another plate upside down.

She removed the top plate to make way for something better, and then gave a little startled cry, which turned all her neighbours' faces towards her, while Denise's eyes sparkled like jewels.

'What is it, then? What is it?' asked those who could not see.

And Jeanne, in an awe-struck whisper, murmured, '*Mille francs!*'

Then Louis turned over the notes one by one, counted them aloud up to ten, and announced in a proud voice, 'Ten thousand francs!' and a hum of amazement ran round the tables, and broke into exclamation—'Thousand thunders!' 'Heavens!' '*Dieu-de-dieu!*' and many more.

'The luck has come to Cour-des-Comptes,' cried one, 'and we'll all be *rentiers* soon.'

'Now we've got Monsieur Gaston and ma'm'selle back,' said another.

And Jeanne, recovering from her surprise, remembered all about it, and leaning forward with swimming eyes, nodded her grateful thanks to me.

Those at the farther ends of the tables came crowding round to look at more money than most of them had ever seen at one time in their lives, and then went back to their places buzzing excitedly, so that they had no appetite until they began; and then they all made wondrous play on the good things in front of them, till it seemed to me that they could not possibly dance, for some hours to come at all events.

But as soon as they were all satisfied, the tables were struck, all except one at the far end of the barn, on to which three chairs were hoisted, and three great mugs of cider; and three important gentlemen seated themselves in the chairs, and began torturing their fiddles into tune. And all the company joined hands in two long lines that ran from end to end of the barn, and then, having arrived at an understanding among themselves, the fiddles dashed headlong into a racketing country dance, and the wavering lines of stiff blue blouses, snowy starched headgear, swirling skirts, and laughing faces swept together and then retreated, back and forth, any steps you like and the more the merrier, back and forth, stamp and kick, shout the tune, clasp your partner or anybody else's, twirl her round, hands again, back and forth, laugh and shout, forget yesterday, never mind to-morrow, you're dancing at Jeanne Thibaud's wedding, and the business of life at the moment is to dance and laugh and shout, and be as merry as you may.

'Ten thousand francs! *Nom de dieu!* ten thousand francs!'

'Well, she's a fine girl is Jeanne, and Louis is *bon garçon*—so we'll dance all night to show them what we think of them.'

'Bravo, bravo, M. le Curé! It's monsieur has an eye for a pretty girl yet. In the olden time, Jeanne'—

'Ah, foolish! those times are gone. *A bas les aristocrats!* Now we are men and we have our rights.'

'Dance, *cochon*, dance!—faster, or thy clumsy hoofs will block the way.'

'*Tiens!* Mademoiselle is not dancing.'

'Simpleton! Of course not. Don't you understand'—

Denise sat in the corner by the fiddlers' table, and laughed and clapped and cheered us all to greater and greater exertions, till the blue blouses lost their stiffness, and the white headgear flapped limply round red, hot, panting faces, and some dropped out, and the chopines of cider began to circulate, and some danced on as though their legs were made of steel, and sang the louder to make up for the rest. Among these, Vaurel and Louis Vard—Vaurel with his armless sleeve broken loose and flapping wildly, except when his partner on that side grasped it merrily in lieu of a hand, his sunny face and big blue eyes all on fire, his voice pealing out like a jerky trumpet, every little bit of him dancing for all he was worth; and Louis Vard keeping up with him to the very last kick, because he wasn't going to be beaten at his own wedding by any man alive, much less by a man with only one arm, even though he had been round the world.

Boulot lay on the edge of Denise's skirt, with his head on his paws, and viewed the proceedings with the contemptuous toleration of a philosopher, whose creed it was to rest awhile after a good dinner. Whenever his master whirled into his neighbourhood he wrinkled up his brows as who would say, 'That's mine—that one with the flapping sleeve. He's not really crazy, you know. He's the best fellow in the world, but he's a bit excited just now. He'll be all right to-morrow. I'm keeping an eye on him.'

Old Father Goliot attracted much attention by insisting on showing his untravelling friends how they danced in Paris, his attempts at imitation of the antics of the *Moulin Rouge* being received with shouts of laughter; and how his stiff old joints would feel about it next day I did not dare to think.

Père Bonnatt won all their hearts by footing it with the best of them. He too was of the soil, and his youth came back as he danced.

I caught Denise's eyes following Gaston with a great glad light in them, and when they fell on mine they fairly snapped with our common enjoyment. For it did our hearts good to see him dancing away among the rest, with all the abandon of a child among his own people, the past forgotten, and with never a thought for the future.

They talk still of Jeanne Thibaud's wedding

down at Cour-des-Comptes, and still marvel at the ten thousand francs she found in her plate.

'That was something like a wedding present—don't you know? I'd get married twice a week on those terms!'

'Ah, *mon beau*! it is not every day one meets an Englishman with so open a hand, and there is only one *ma'm'selle*.'

'It is true! There is only one *ma'm'selle*.'

That is how they keep our memory green at Cour-des-Comptes.

They danced till dusk, and then they lighted candles, and danced on far into the night. But when the gloaming fell we others stole away, and strolled slowly through the darkening woods to the Château.

And as Gaston and Père Bonnatt walked on in front, Denise, my wife, hung more heavily on my arm, the sweetest burden in the world.

'Tired, dearest?' I asked.

'Just a little tired, but very, very happy,' she said.

And the whole world held no more grateful man than I.

We live in Britain and in Brittany, Denise and I, and on the waters round about. And the freedom of the seas gives us a glorious pleasure-ground; from Iceland and the fiords to the softer beauties of the Mediterranean, they are all ours, and we draw fresh stores of life and endless enjoyment from them.

I bought the *Clutha*. There were so many pleasant memories attached to her that I did not care that she should go into alien hands. And Andrew Lyle is still content to be her captain and our very good friend.

Up on the Clyde there is a broad-spread, one-storied house built of red sandstone, with deep

verandas, nestling among the trees almost opposite the Cloch, which knows us at times in the early summer, when the air is sweet and bracing, and the hills are flushing with the heather. But the autumn finds us among the greens and golds and the fiery reds and lovely russet-browns of Cour-des-Comptes, among our own people, in our other home.

And once and again there comes upon me the recollection of that blood-curdling night, when crazy Roussel got into the house, and struck panic into the stout heart of Prudent Vaurel and valiant Boulot and myself. And the door of the little room at the end of the passage discomforts me at times, with the remembrance of the dumb bedevilment that once lay behind it.

And then the great hall rings with the patter of tiny feet, and merry peals of childish laughter scatter the ghosts of the past; and Boulot bursts into the room to greet his old friends, while his new ones hang on to him by tail and collar—the tail that still looks like a rusty iron spike, the collar he wore at Jeanne Thibaud's wedding. And behind him comes his master, beaming welcome from every hair of his sunny face, and stands before my wife, and says again in a voice of loving reverence, '*Ma'm'selle*!' just exactly as he did the day when first I made her acquaintance in front of his little stone house by the river.

For to her own people, who love her so dearly, she will always be *ma'm'selle*, though she live to be one hundred and ten, as our good friend Prudent would say; and to me, who love her most dearly of all, though our journey should run beyond the allotted span, travelling hand in hand and heart to heart—to me too she will always be *ma'm'selle*, and she will never be more than twenty years old.

THE END.

ABOUT SOME OF OUR LATEST CONTRIBUTORS.



IN two recent occasions the subject of former contributors was discussed in these pages under the headings of 'Notable Beginners in *Chambers's Journal*' (1895) and 'Some Early Contributors to *Chambers's Journal*' (1897). With some assistance from the authors themselves, we are here enabled to make an excursion into the regions of the present and the future. The initial suggestion is due to a correspondent and occasional contributor, who proposed an article 'in the last number of the year; the article to be called the "Geography of *Chambers's Journal*," showing whence have come the year's articles and stories that have passed through your threshing-machine into the *Journal*.' This suggestion has been broadened in its scope, so as to compass a few biographical details; for

it is even truer to-day than in Addison's time 'that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure till he knows whether the writer of it is a black or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of a like nature.' It is mainly with the 'other particulars' of a literary kind we have concerned ourselves; and these, it is to be hoped, will possess at least freshness and reliability.

According to one of the ablest of the young publishers of to-day, no paper will take with the masses which consists mainly of essays or leaders. 'They want things served up with other interesting matter, and with as much of the personal element as it is possible to give them. The masses still incline entirely to the lighter side of literature.' This was exactly the view of Charles Dickens also. Those who have gratified this instinct

in a clever and taking way have found themselves on the high-road to fortune; but this kind of thing may be overdone, and it may be possible to have a higher ideal, and try to lead the masses some steps upwards. The newspaper has trenched on the province of the magazine, and the magazine has too frequently become a thing of shreds and patches, an illuminated scrap-book for an idle hour, without much intellectual sediment or stimulus. The conductors of this *Journal* have aimed, and still aim, at a little more than this, and are glad to acknowledge the assistance of a large body of contributors from every part of the habitable globe. Sir William Turner in his British Association address said there was no hereditary aristocracy in science, the army of workers being recruited from all classes. So is the army of writers; and therefore it has been possible to maintain the original standard of furnishing rational and recreative literature, with much positive information.

What was said by the conductors at the beginning of the second volume in 1833 is, we trust, as true to-day, that 'all has been plain, downright substantial matter, generally based upon the broadest human interests, and depending for its effect solely upon its own merits. Though sensible, moreover, that we might have extended our circulation very much, especially out of Scotland, by the introduction of pictorial embellishments, we have stood steadfast upon letterpress alone, addressing our readers through their understandings rather than their senses, and thereby making certainly a far less direct appeal to the mass of the public than is made by the only respectable work which exceeds us now in circulation.' This last is a reference to the *Penny Magazine*, which was illustrated, and ceased in 1845. The fresh competitors that—over sixty years later—now appeal by means of illustrations to the senses are legion.

It is the 'coming writers' we wish to lay hold of here, for such men and women as Mr George Manville Fenn, Mr William Le Queux, Mr Guy Boothby, Mr Louis Becke, and Mrs L. T. Meade are familiar acquaintances to the reading public. There are always in the background an army of meritorious writers, who have not been advertised by themselves or by anybody else, but whose sterling qualities help to form the backbone of many literary enterprises. *Chambers*, by its method of gleaning from a wide field, and because it has never been the slave of any clique or coterie, has been able to present a great variety of fare, which its readers have ever been ready to recognise and acknowledge. There is a period at which the professional writer becomes hackneyed, and repeats himself under various tricks of style; by drawing from a wide constituency, as has always been done for these pages, freshness and variety can alone be maintained.

Mr John Oxenham, author of *Rising Fortunes*,

Three Times I Married Mary, and also of our last serial, 'Our Lady of Deliverance,' is good enough to say that he finds peculiar pleasure in the thought that *Chambers* likes his work, for one of the pleasantest reminiscences of his boyhood was in lying on the hearthrug before the fire and revelling in 'Lost Sir Massingberd,' 'Lady Flavia,' and other good company in its pages, when he certainly had not the remotest idea of ever contributing to them. Mr Oxenham is best left to speak for himself. He dates at present from Greenock. In answer to the question how he had 'drifted' into literature, he says:

'Why "drifted"? Is that the final result of your observation of the writing fraternity? It gave me a twinge to read the word. May not a man deliberately climb out of the whirlpool of business into the fresher and very much cleaner and more inspiring rock of letters? I spent many years in the rapids and the whirlpool; then I climbed out—or began to—and so began to live. I do not altogether regret the wasted years; they are useful to look back upon. I regret, however, that I did not begin my climb sooner.

'Since you ask it: I began to write for my own pleasure and as a distraction from other matters. The delight of it grew upon me, "as the appetite comes in eating." I have no tale of hardships, since I was not writing for a living. What I enjoyed producing other folks seemed to enjoy perusing, and were even willing to pay for. Eventually I took my courage in both hands, and climbed out of the mud of business life on to clean rock. If I have not climbed high, I have at all events climbed clean; and, all being well, I intend to climb higher. I think the story running in *Chambers* was distinctly the strongest thing I had done up to that time; but I have done stronger since.

'I am north-country, but the wrong side of the Border. All the same, my pleasantest associations are with the west coast, and I used to tramp it with a knapsack from Dunoon to Fort-William with an enjoyment that is still fresh to me. Then I spent some years in Brittany; lived even in the small stone house above the weir overlooking the Château—though it is not called Cour-des-Comptes; and my host was Prudent Vaurel, and though the latter name is not his, the personality is. I can hear his great roaring laugh at this moment as he threatens Boulot with the water. I had the chance of seeing a good deal of the Continent, from Stockholm down to Genoa, and fairly well all that lies between, and footed it to and fro in Switzerland both in summer and in winter, which is far better. Then business matters took me to America and Canada for a couple of years. I name all this simply because I consider this, all unwittingly, was as good training as I could possibly have had. Since then I was many years in London; and the roar of Fleet Street and the Strand is still in my ears. It is

more tuneful—say, rather less inharmonious—at a distance than when one is in it.

'This is a longer screed than I intended. You must blame the pen, a good old boon and blessing Waverley.'

The general reader must have noticed the name of Charles Edwardes in many of the magazines and over against some popular travel volumes; but he can have no conception of the multitude of other anonymous contributions of this busy writer, who when he is not afoot in England or America, or astride his cycle on the Continent, dates from St Mark's Place, Wolverhampton. He is one of the few topographical writers who can make his descriptive articles thoroughly interesting and readable from first to last, while conveying much information, and the fresh impressions of a traveller. 'A Ride to Cr  cy' and 'The Diary of a Busaco Monk' are recent cases in point. Amongst his short stories contributed to *Chambers* is 'The Silver Joss.' He is to be envied for the constant variety that comes into his life, and the ability wherewith he makes others share his pleasure and profit; and yet he says, 'What have I done that the public should feel any particular interest in myself?' We are able to condemn him, if not out of his own mouth, at least from his own pen, which furnishes this record:

'As a man of letters, John Morley opened *Macmillan's Magazine* to me in 1884; and in *Cornhill* under James Payn I wrote about forty short stories and articles. Of my other periodical contributions I can only say that they are computable by the five hundred; that they include essays, descriptive papers, and stories; and that their area extends from the *Nineteenth Century* downwards. For Mr Alfred Harmsworth, whose personal acquaintance I value, I have written and still write much. My books include the volume on *Leopards* in Tr  bner's Philosophical Series in 1882; also travel-books on Crete, the Canary Isles, Sardinia, and Jutland; school stories: "Dr Burleigh's Boys," "The New House Master," and "Jones the Mysterious;" and a disinterred romance, "Shadowed by the Gods." I am still holding off volume fiction, in the sanguine hope that I may attain wisdom and wit enough for such long enterprises later in life.

'I might mention the gift made to me by the Archduke Louis of Austria of his colossal work on the Balearics, printed by him for private distribution—these with a note to say he had been charmed by reading some of my papers. I do not care to advertise myself; but this sort of thing does, I fancy, interest the public.'

The work of Mr John Arthur Barry sometimes tempts comparison with that of W. Clark Russell, and sometimes with Bret Harte. But he has an individuality and style all his own. Like Mr F. T. Bullen and Mr Oxenham, he draws from his own varied experience for characters and local colour. When quite a boy he went to sea

as an apprentice in the mercantile marine, left the sea for the Australian gold-diggings, and afterwards settled as a sheep-farmer at the Antipodes. During this time he began to write and publish tales of adventure in Australian papers, and also at home in *Chambers's Journal*, the *Graphic*, and other periodicals. In 1893 he was in England arranging literary business, which included the issue of a collection of stories entitled *Steve Brown's Bunyip*. As the English climate does not suit him, he returned to Australia the same season, and was for a year or two at an up-country sheep-station. Finally he settled in Sydney to give literature his undivided attention. Besides his contributions to *Chambers*, stories of his have appeared in *Cornhill*, *The Strand Magazine*, and the *Graphic*. His other publications include such collections of stories as *In the Great Deep* and *Against the Tides of Fate*, and two novels, *The Luck of the Native Born* and *A Son of the Sea*. As a journalist some of his papers on Old Sydney for the *Sydney Mail* have made quite a local sensation.

Mr W. E. Cule, who dates from Cardiff, is a young writer of much promise and not a little performance. He is a careful and conscientious literary craftsman, with a gift of humour, the true story-teller's instincts, and he is never tedious. His short stories of schoolboy life in *Young England* have delighted all the young folks who have read them, and we are glad to hear they have been reprinted. His brightness and originality tempt comparison with some of the American short story writers. For *Chambers* he has written 'Lady Stalland's Diamonds' and 'The Anthropologist's Coat,' while 'Old Mr Jellicoe's Plan' and 'Lord Cumberwell's Lesson' are yet to come. The reader is safe with anything to which Mr Cule's name is attached. This in brief is the story of his literary career:

'I came to take to writing, I believe, because of my insatiable love of reading, and as a result, also, of my admiration for everybody who wrote books I liked. I was intended for commercial work, and made one or two attempts in that direction, writing all the while in my leisure time. My first efforts, at the age of sixteen or so, were made in the "Literary Olympic" of *Young Folk's Paper*. This was a page where young authors might exercise their energies; and among my companions at that time, but far before me, were two whose names are better known now, Mr R. Murray Gilchrist and Mr A. J. Adeock. My first profitable venture was made in 1892, when Mr Edward Step (now literary adviser to F. Warne & Co.) accepted one of my stories for a boy's magazine. In 1894 one of my stories went to Mr Andrew Melrose, manager of the Sunday School Union; and it is through his kindness of suggestion and encouragement that most of my work has been done since. In 1895 I was able to devote myself entirely to writing, and in 1899

Mr Melrose published two volumes, *Sir Constant and Child Voices*; while Messrs W. & R. Chambers brought out a little fairy book, *Mabel's Prince Wonderful*. I have just been appointed editor of the *Sunday School Teacher*. My age is twenty-nine.

Dr Riccardo Stephens, a young Edinburgh doctor, writes frankly as follows:

'I had published perhaps a couple of short stories and a couple or so of articles, when a friend with more hopes for me than I had for myself badgered me day after day to compete in an American "Mystery Story" competition. I had a shot at last, and wrote the *Cruciform Mark* under rather disadvantageous conditions. The United States people promptly returned it, saying that they did not see any mystery about it. Then Chatto & Windus took the book, and published it in 1896. Bliss, Sands & Co. ordered *Mr Peters* on the strength of that in 1897, and also published *Mr De La Rue Smyth*, which had appeared in the *Westminster Gazette*. Next Mr Sands was rash enough to take *The Prince and the Undertaker* and *What they Undertook* without reading it. I am glad to recollect that I begged him not to buy a pig in a poke, for people generally haven't seemed to care for it. I like it best of all; but that doesn't prove anything. Then I wrote a good bit of another book, but on reading Anthony Hope's *King's Mirror* I suspected that people would say mine was an attempt at imitation; so the thing is unfinished. Every now and then since the *Cruciform Mark* I have published short stories and verses in *Chambers's Journal*, as you know, and in other magazines. I think it is pretty well arranged that John Murray publishes a book of short stories for me as soon as I have written one or two more of a more cheerful nature than some of those that he saw. I don't think I can add anything of the slightest interest, unless you care to know that the more I like a thing the less other people seem to care for it. So that the things over which I sneer and snort (pot-boilers) go out with comparatively great prospects.'

The diffidence of the authoress of *Laddie, Don, and Pomona* has hitherto prevented her real name and portrait from going forth to the public. But her work is finer, and has more grit, sanity, and beauty, than is the case with hundreds of writers who are better known. It is possible that her *Laddie* may become a classic, like Dr John Brown's *Rab*. Her *Pomona* and *Baby John* appeared first in these columns. This year her new book is *Tom's Boy*, just issued by W. and R. Chambers.

Mr F. T. Bullen, who has made quite a reputation by his *Cruise of the Cachalot*, *Palace of Poor Jack*, and *Log of a Sea Waf*, which comprise experiences and recollections of early days at sea, had some of his first contributions accepted by *Chambers*. Mr C. J. Cutcliffe Hyne, the creator of 'Captain Kettle,' has the advantage of standing six feet two and a half inches high, with a con-

stitution like 'copper nails,' which has been to his advantage in roughing it in many outlying regions of the world, including the Arctic regions, whither he went with the Jackson-Harmsworth expedition.

Mr David Lawson Johnstone, author of *The Rebel Commodore*, is a young writer of great promise and merit, who early left business to work with the pen; and his first article appeared in *Chambers* in 1886. His first tale appeared as a serial in James Henderson's *Young Folks Paper*, in succession to R. L. Stevenson's *Kidnapped*. The *Academy* said of his *Paradise of the North* that it showed far more genuine imaginative power than had been revealed by any new writer for many years; while the *Athenæum* characterised his short story reprinted last year in a collection called *Peril and Prowess* as one of the best in a volume which contained specimens by Henty, G. M. Fenn, and Dr Conan Doyle. His Jacobite tale, 'The Lost Cause,' is reprinted in a collection called *Venture and Valour*. Mr Johnstone's own narrative is interesting because of the light it throws on Mr James Henderson's *Young Folks* and its array of contributors who have since made a name:

'It was at the suggestion of the editor of a Brechin paper that I submitted a short story to a certain periodical called *Young Folks*. It was duly accepted, and thus began a connection that only ended with the decease of the journal. *Young Folks*, although it may never have lain on the tables of the cultured, was a print of some note in its day and generation. Among its contributors it had many writers who have made their mark. Besides Louis Stevenson, who gave *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* to the world through its pages—he has himself told the story of the former in *My First Book*—I can recall the names of William Westall, Dr Japp, Max Pemberton, Charles Edwardes, Ascott R. Hope, J. S. Fletcher, Mrs Amelia Barr, Professor Eric Robertson, William Sharp, Alfred C. Harmsworth, Robert Leighton, and Bloundelle Burton. In this connection it would be ungrateful not to mention the proprietor and conductor of the journal, Mr James Henderson. *Young Folks* was his ewe lamb among the many papers issued from his publishing-house, and in it he did much to foster the beginner of promise. There are many writers—I am proud to number myself among them—who found their early path made easier and more pleasant by the discriminating encouragement of the kind-hearted Scotsman of Red Lion Court.

'My humble beginnings, then, may be found in *Chambers's Journal* and *Young Folks*. For a year or two I contributed regularly to the latter, and more spasmodically to other periodicals; and also managed to get some miscellaneous journalistic work—acting for a short time as correspondent to a New York paper. Then Mr Henderson suggested that I should try a serial story for him. "The Mountain Kingdom" was the result.

After running not unsuccessfully in *Young Folks*, it was immediately thereafter (in 1888, when I was barely eighteen) published by Messrs Sampson Low. "The Mountain Kingdom" was the forerunner of a series of stories of adventure in the same paper—all of which were subsequently issued by Messrs Chambers. And for the latter firm I have since done other work of divers kind—with, I hope, as much satisfaction to them and to their readers as to myself.

'Looking over some old numbers of *Young Folks*, I have just noticed one or two curious facts. In 1888, while "The Mountain Kingdom" was running, there was a series of short biographies of great men, entitled "The Secret of Success." The author was A. C. Harmsworth, who has since put his discovery to good use. At the same time, Max Pemberton had a series of articles on various sports. A year or two later the chief writers of short stories were C. Edwardes and Murray Gilchrist, both of whom have since done good work in wider fields.'

Amongst recent story-tellers in *Chambers* have been T. W. Speight, Fred Whishaw, Robert Barr, E. D. Cuming, Carlton Dawe, James Workman, John Stafford, Harold Bindloss (who spins a good West African yarn), John Mackie, Dr Andrew Balfour, Rosaline Masson, Mrs Cunningham-Graham, Mrs Mary Stuart Boyd (wife of Mr A. S. Boyd the artist), James Patey, and Halliday Rogers (Miss Harriet Reid), author of 'Meggotsbrae.' Isabella Fyvie Mayo, who, though London born, now dates from Aberdeen, had Mrs S. C. Hall as literary godmother, began to write at seventeen, and made her literary reputation at twenty-five with 'Occupations of a Retired Life,' which she had been asked to write for Mr Strahan by Dr Japp, then assistant-editor of *Good Words* and the *Sunday Magazine*. An adverse criticism which one of her books received in the *Saturday Review* drew forth a kindly letter from Mr Ruskin and an invitation to dine with him. She has been twice in Canada and in the East, and has done and is still doing much good magazine work between whiles.

Mr John Buchan, author of that fine Tweedside story, 'John Burnet of Barns,' after a remarkably successful career at Oxford, is now reading for the Bar. One is quite prepared to hear that his recreations are shooting, fishing, and mountaineering, for the open-air feeling in his stories and sketches is unmistakable. His younger brother William, author of 'Comedy on the Moors' and 'David and Jonathan of the Hills,' promises to follow in his footsteps.

Mr John Finimore, author of the new story for the beginning of 1901, 'The Lover Fugitives,' an historical romance set in the period following the Monmouth Rebellion, has published *The Custom of the Country* and *The Red Men of the Dusk*, as well as *Fairy Stories from the Little Mountain*. He dates from Cardiganshire. This is Mr Finimore's record:

'As regards the manner in which I began to write, I fancy my case is common enough: a touch of *cacoethes scribendi*, and a liberal waste of paper, ink, and spare time. My first attempts—short stories—saw the light in *Household Words*. My first novel, *The Custom of the Country*, was published by Messrs Lawrence & Bullen in 1898. Though well spoken of by *Literature* and other journals, it did not, so far as I have heard, set the Thames on fire. It was followed in 1899 by two books, *The Red Men of the Dusk* and *Fairy Stories from the Little Mountain*. *The Red Men of the Dusk* is founded partly on Welsh legend, and had the good fortune to be well received by a wide range of critical authorities. Two studies of peasant life have also appeared, one in *Temple Bar*, the other in *Macmillan's Magazine*.'

To mention general contributions would be quite an endless business, but we may be excused if we draw attention to coming articles on industrial subjects by one of the best informed and most capable writers of to-day. Mr James Burnley, who is now back to London, wrote while in Chicago, where he had been doing journalistic work, certain papers on 'Industrial Supremacy,' 'Millionaires,' and 'The Trail of the Trust.' Mr Burnley, who is author of the article 'Newspapers' in *Chambers's Encyclopedia*, is also author of about a dozen volumes, such as *Fortunes made in Business* and *The Romance of Modern Industry*. For the last four years he has been making careful observations and gathering material for such articles. To touch the subject of industry at all in America is, he says, to run butt against the great trust problem and get tangled in the mighty operations of the millionaires. The articles represent a great deal of careful work, and are as accurate and up-to-date as it was possible to make them. Mr W. S. Fletcher, of the Cape Government Railways, who has lately been on holiday in this country, came on to Bloemfontein just behind Lord Roberts, and described that place and also the field of Magersfontein. To his daughter we are indebted for a paper on 'Kimberley during the Siege.' Mr Fletcher possesses a copy of the very rare *News of the Camp*, published in Pretoria during the siege in 1881, which he described in the article 'Transvaal Reminiscences.' Mr Alfred Kinnear, war correspondent, early invalided home, has written three times on various subjects.

Mr J. J. Bell, who has made a very promising start as a contributor of verse to many magazines, in 1896 had his first four sets of verses accepted simultaneously by *Chambers's Journal*, *Pall Mall Magazine*, *Parson's*, and the *Sketch*. Like Mr W. E. Cule, he is still under thirty, which may be one reason why he styles his weekly contributions to the *Glasgow Evening Times* 'A Young Man's Fancies.' More fortunate than most budding poets, he has published about four hundred pieces of verse in various periodicals, besides two volumes

of rhymes for children, *The New Noah's Ark* (1898), *Jack of all Trades* (1899), and *Songs of the Hour* (1900), a booklet of war-verse. Mr Bell, who began writing rhymes for his own amusement, contributed to the *Glasgow University Magazine* (of which he was editor in 1896-97), had his first short story accepted by the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* in 1896, was engaged for a time in

the University Chemical Laboratory, and has since devoted his whole time to writing.

These are but examples: it is impossible in our space to go further. Many names are left out as good as those that have found a place. But those that have so found a place are, we believe, of sterling merit, and no pains will be spared to establish even a more satisfactory record in the future.

STEPHEN WHITLEGE'S REVENGE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.



WHEN Stephen reached home, after his interview with Victor Benfield, he found Jacob Pummelow, his old man-servant, and his father's before him, wheeling a barrow across the yard. The rattle of the iron wheel upon the cobble-stones sounded in his ears like so much demoniacal laughter. Now, if there was one person in the world of whom Stephen stood in any sort of awe, it was of Jacob; the old fellow had a sharp and bitter tongue, and a knack of letting fall in an apparently innocent way little observations that stuck like thorns in the flesh and rankled for hours afterwards. Among other things, he had brought the study of the proverbs of his native land to a high state of perfection, and was wont, when occasion offered, to fire them off like minute-guns. Anger and reproof were alike wasted upon him. If such a thing were possible, he was more obstinate than his master; and when once he had made up his mind to do a thing, he clung to his purpose like a limpet to a rock. On this occasion he looked up as his master approached, and noticed that the latter's face was clouded. He prepared his discourse accordingly.

'You be lookin' fair poorly this mornin', Master Stephen,' he began. 'Twas what I said to myself as soon as I set eyes on 'e. My sight may be failin' me, as the sayin' goes; but, old man as I be, I can see well enough for that.'

'Confound you and your eyes!' growled his master. 'You are always croaking.'

'Ay, ay,' said the old man cheerfully, putting down the barrow and rubbing his wrinkled hands together as he spoke. 'Tis the way of old folks. They hain't able to help theirselves, I'm thinkin'. 'Flesh is but grass,' says the Preacher, and the time will come when, strong man as ye be, ye'll be like poor old Jacob here, good for naught but churchyard mould.'

'Twould be better if some people were there already,' said Stephen pointedly. 'If flesh were grass, as you say, I could find the devil a good hay-crop.'

'Tis the way of youth to speak such vain words,' persisted old Jacob, who, having once found a listener, was *not* prepared to let him slip

again. 'I mind me now that young Squire Bembridge talked the same way the very day that he was shot in Three-Mile Wood. "Pummelow," says he, just as you be speakin' now, "life may be short, but I'll make the most of it." Poor dear! how was he to know that that night he'd be lyin' stark and stiff with a bullet through his head? But there, there, ye're young and full of your own conceit; but ye'll go his way as like as not. What says the'—

Stephen waited to hear no more, but strode across the yard to the house. He was familiar with the story of poor young Bembridge's murder; but what motive had the old fool for bringing it up on this morning of all others? He sat down to his accounts and the general business of the day, but, try how he would, he could not concentrate his attention upon the matter in hand. He found his thoughts continually reverting to Bembridge's murder, and from it to Mildred and the Captain. They were happy enough without him. He might be dead—ay, lying dead in Three-Mile Wood with a bullet in his brain—for all they would bother about him.

That night when he went to bed he could not sleep. He tossed and tumbled on his couch, always with the recollection of the old man's words ringing in his ears. Next day it was the same, and again the day after. But this state of things could not last long. When he woke on the Thursday morning his brain was on fire and his hand shook so that he dared not trust himself to shave; therefore, without performing the operation, he dressed and then descended to his sitting-room. There, following a habit he had developed of late, he poured out half a tumbler of brandy and drank it off. Sheepishly, as if he were half-ashamed of what he was doing, he crossed to a cupboard in the corner of the room, and from it took a rifle which he had purchased earlier in the year. Still with the same curious expression upon his face, he weighed it in his hand, and then, with a shudder, replaced it in the cupboard, only to bring it out again for another inspection a few minutes later. This time he took a cartridge from a box and dropped it into the breech. Once more he put the weapon back, locked the cupboard, and seated himself at his desk, resting his

head upon his hands. His breakfast was dismissed untouched. He could not eat with this thought in his brain. At last, seizing his hat, he left the house, fled from old Jacob—who had prepared several more home-truths for him—and, finally, crossing the bridge, made his way through the village in the direction of the Vicarage. Why he should have chosen that path on that particular morning he could not have told you had you asked him; but the fact remains that when he reached the gate he was just in time to find Captain Benfield's dog-cart pulled up before it. The Captain was seated in it, his gun-case was propped up beside him, and Mildred was standing in happy conversation by the horse. Still impelled by the same mysterious force which had driven him from home, he walked towards them. Mildred was the first to notice him, and she gave a little start of alarm as she realised what a wreck the man, once so strong, had now become.

'Hullo, Stephen!' said the Captain cheerily as the other approached, 'so you are able to get away after all. Good Heavens, man, how ill you look! What on earth have you been doing with yourself?'

'Nothing,' Stephen replied angrily. 'I am as well as I have ever been in my life. No, I can't come with you to-day. I have several important appointments, and can't afford to waste my time as you seem able to do.'

Without another word he continued his walk until he reached a wayside public-house—his own property. Entering the bar, he called for brandy, and when the bottle was placed before him, almost filled his glass. He drank it off, and then went on his way again, to come to a standstill presently on one of the iron bridges to which allusion was made at the commencement of the story. It was by his own exertions that that bridge had been placed there, and now, as he stood looking down at the swiftly-running water below, he could have cursed the day he had moved in the matter, for a low mocking laugh seemed to come up to him from beneath the arch. That decided him.

'I'll do it,' he muttered hoarsely. 'If it costs me my life, I'll do it. What right has he to steal her from me?'

The river ran red as blood beneath him, and the mocking laughter continued without cessation. Unable to bear it any longer, he left the bridge and strode homeward as fast as his legs could carry him. From the moment that he had made up his mind, a peace such as he had not known for days had come to him. During the afternoon he was as business-like and as collected as usual; it was not until dusk began to fall that his old restlessness returned. Then, try how he would, he could not remain quiet. He paced his room, paid repeated visits to the mill, went out and watched the placid surface of the mill-pond, upon which the swallows were darting hither and

thither; and when at last all his men had left the premises, and he was sure that he was not being watched, he returned to the house, drank another half-bottle of brandy, and then paid a visit to the cupboard in which reposed the rifle. This time there was no hesitation. He took it from its resting-place, dropped a couple of venomous-looking cartridges into his pocket, and then, letting himself out by a side-door, crossed the narrow strip of garden and passed into the meadows beyond. A hare, down for a night's feed from the uplands, sprang up before him; but he did not see her. A couple of wood-pigeons, sighting the weapon he carried in his hand, flew from a tree above his head with a noisy flutter of their wings; but he paid no attention to them. He was conscious only of one thing, and that held him as in a vice. His mind's eye was picturing a high dog-cart drawn by a fast horse, and driven by a man who knew what he was about. It was a swift-moving target. Could he possibly manage to hit it? At any rate he was going to try; and if he could, what then? That was a question he dared not answer just at present.

Long shadows were already drawing across the valley. It was a perfect autumn evening, and the picture presented to him would have been difficult to equal for pure landscape beauty. At last he reached the high-road, which, as I have elsewhere said, ran for some miles at the foot of the Downs. He looked to right and left, but no sign of the dog-cart he wanted was to be seen. It was a considerable drive from Green's Farm, and he knew that Victor would be likely to shoot as long as it was light; so, having arrived at this conclusion, he crossed the road, and made his way along the hillside until he came to a small copse beside a disused chalk-pit. Here he was able to conceal himself effectually, while at the same time he could command a good view of the high-road on either hand. A pulse was beating inside his head like a steam-hammer, and the long strip of dusty road danced before his eyes like a ribbon shaken by the wind. He felt confident, however, of being able to shoot straight enough when the time should arrive. The wind sighed through the branches of the trees above him, and the rustling of the leaves sounded in his ears like the whispering of evil counsellors. They urged him to be careful of his aim, and by so doing to avenge himself for the wrong his enemy had done him. He clutched his rifle tighter and again scanned the road. Once more, however, he was unsuccessful in his search. A quarter of an hour passed, and still there was no sign of the dog-cart. Then a black speck made its appearance about a mile away, which grew gradually larger until it took the form of the cart for which he was waiting. Presently he could distinguish the Captain's face, and even the brass corners of the gun-case

propped up beside him. Only a few yards now, and he would be within easy range. He drew the stock of the rifle closer to his shoulder, and glanced along the barrel. His finger was on the trigger, and all he had to do now was to bend the finger and the bullet would speed upon its fatal mission. Then—— Suddenly he threw up his head. What on earth did this mean? The driver had brought his horse to a standstill exactly opposite where he lay, and was deliberately lighting a cigar. Stephen stared at him with eyes aghast. What did he mean by pulling up in such a place? Was he courting certain death? The man must be mad to run such a risk. He saw the match burst into flame, and a moment later the smoke of the cigar curl up into the evening air. His gaze was riveted upon the dog-cart and its occupant. Do what he would, he could not withdraw his eyes, nor act as he intended. For the time being he was hypnotised and powerless. Then, almost before he knew what had happened, the Captain had started his horse again and had turned the corner of the hill.

Dropping his head upon his hands, Stephen burst into such a paroxysm of weeping as he had not known since he was a child. This was succeeded by a desperate calmness that was almost death-like. Hour after hour he lay on the damp grass, scarcely moving. Night fell; the stars shone out; still he remained in the same position. The evening mist rose from the river and wandered like a ghost among the trees; but he paid no heed to it. At last, staggering like a drunken

man, he rose and looked about him. He saw his rifle lying among the leaves, picked it up, and slowly descended the hill, cursing himself for a coward as he went. It was nearly midnight by the time he reached the mill once more. The clack of the wheel seemed to mock at him, and the hooting of an owl perched upon the barn sounded like a lost spirit triumphing at his discomfiture. He shook his fist at it, entered the house, and made his way to his sitting-room, where he deposited his rifle in its accustomed place. Pouring out a glass of spirits, he tossed it off; another followed, and still another. At last, reeling to his room, he threw himself upon his bed without removing his clothes, but not to sleep. Next morning he was delirious, and the old crone, his housekeeper, despatched Jacob, who promptly regarded himself in the light of a prophet, for the doctor. From that day forward, for nearly a month, Stephen wrestled with death, and when he looked upon the world again it was as a man so changed that the folk he met scarcely recognised him. If he had been silent and morose before, he was doubly so now; he seldom left the mill, and when he did so, spoke to no man. Then, to the astonishment of the village, news went abroad that the mill was for sale, and that Stephen Whitledge was leaving England for South Africa, never to return. Accordingly, one winter's morning, without farewell to any living soul, he set off along the high-road to Salisbury, on the first step of the long journey that was to end as you will presently see.

F A R - S E E I N G.

THE writer recalls a Christmas party at a vicarage-house on the banks of the Tees thirty years ago. The evening was growing late, and the curate, a south-country man fresh from Oxford, having just left the house, came hurrying back to announce that there was a beautiful auroral display in progress. No one, however, stirred abroad to see it. In vain the young man expatiated on the wondrous flickering flames that were being flung across the sky. He could arouse no enthusiasm, for the fact was that we all knew that aurora. It was an impressive spectacle, certainly, and only occasionally well seen; but it was simply born of the furnaces in the Black Country fifty miles away. Over half that distance the shimmer of the North Foreland Lighthouse is well seen in the sky under certain conditions; and when these conditions prevail the night-watchmen round the coast are wont to say that stormy weather is at hand.

It follows, virtually as a matter of course,

that when the air is charged with excessive moisture the canopy overhead will reflect at night-time any strong glare from earth. Instances of far-seeing in broad day are common enough in many parts of England. From the writer's house, standing high above the Kennet Valley, the outline of the Hog's Back in Surrey is frequently to be clearly sighted on the eastern sky-line after morning hours. This is across a range of thirty-five miles as the crows flies, the most favourable conditions being such as prevail when plumping showers are around, and when hills that are, or should be, ten miles away have approached to within six miles or thereabouts.

However, greater marvels of long-seeing reach us from the clearer skies of other climes. Humboldt tells us that the transparency of the mountain air is so great under the equator that in the province of Quito the white cloak of a horseman may be distinguished with the naked eye at a horizontal distance of eighty-nine thousand six hundred and sixty-four feet. This is a very precise measurement, certainly, and works out as

exactly thirty-two yards short of seventeen miles : surely a record of its kind.

It is clear that terrestrial objects should be better seen when elevated above the denser strata that lie near the earth's surface, and the truth of this is borne out by the occasional extreme clearness of mountain peaks. The writer has observed the crest of Kinchinjunga from Darjeeling apparently so near as to be within easy rifle-range, yet forty miles of valley really lie between ; but this is as nothing, for it is said that the towering cumulus clouds over thunderstorms on the American prairies may sometimes be seen on the horizon at a distance of two hundred miles. Conversely, if the observer occupies a very elevated standpoint, his range of vision, under favourable atmospheric conditions, may become very extended indeed. The balloonist is aware of this on occasions ; and, though thoroughly favourable opportunities are comparatively rare, it is probably from a balloon sailing in the free air that the farthest unaided sight-seeing has been recorded. Once when about four miles high over London, Mr Glaisher saw not only the whole English coast-line to south and east, clearly distinguishing the towns of Brighton, Dover, Deal, and Margate, but could descry Ipswich and the sea actually beyond Yarmouth, which could be little less than one hundred and twenty miles away.

Where neither the object viewed nor the point of observation is greatly elevated, it should need no pointing out that a physical barrier necessarily prevents the possibility of vision ; but this fact is perhaps seldom fully realised. Thus it has been suggested that Lincoln Cathedral ought to be visible from the towers of Ely. Both are lofty buildings on elevated ground, and the country between them is the dead flat of the endless fens ; but the two towns are sixty-seven miles apart, and this stretch of intervening country, though to all appearance of a universal level, is obviously rounded by the mere convexity of the earth. The fact is, that each building must stand some thousand feet above the level of the sea to be fairly seen by the other.

At sea, the visible horizon lies at a distance of three miles from an observer whose eye is six feet above the water's edge ; while to the same observer the top of a ship's mast sixty feet high would disappear from sight when twelve miles off.

The light of the sun can be seen reflected off a surface of sufficient size and brilliancy over unlimited space. It is seen by the naked eye reflected off the surface of Saturn when nearly a thousand million miles away. This fact is turned to account in the modern heliograph, the limitations of which lie only in the occasional difficulty of finding an observer's position. It usually suffices to sweep the horizon towards the most likely

points with the flash until this is answered, when accurate signalling is at once established. In the Waziri Expedition of 1881 direct communication was thus kept up across an interval of seventy miles. The flashes can also when necessary be thrown on to the clouds, and it is stated that under favourable conditions signals have been read as much as one hundred and ninety miles away.

Assuming that in the foregoing well-attested records we have the means of determining the present limit of human unaided vision, it becomes an inquiry of some interest as to whether the range of human sight has improved or deteriorated with the lapse of time ; and the inquiry is not altogether a futile one. Close observation of the heavenly bodies has been maintained from the earliest times, and we have many unquestionable tests of the power of vision—always considered unaided—possessed by the ancients ; though at first sight the application of these tests may seem perplexing. Thus, to average modern eyesight the small attendant star hard-by the middle star in the tail of the Great Bear is quite an easy object, yet, according to Humboldt, the Arabs used to call it 'Saidak,' or a test-star with reference to eyesight.

On the other hand, to those who know well where to look for it, and are familiar with its appearance in a telescope, the famous nebula in Andromeda is just fairly visible ; yet hundreds of years before the invention of the telescope the ancients had detected it also. It is, of course, very possible to conceive that either of the above objects may have changed appreciably in brightness during historic times ; but coming to another well known object infinitely harder to detect, we are met by a fact rather puzzling. The rings of Saturn, as is well known, are only visible in a fairly good telescope even to those who know what to look for, and yet it appears certain that in the mythology of the ancient Chaldees this planet is indicated by the strange representation of a man encircled by a ring. That this remarkable fact should be merely an example of a curious coincidence is hard to credit, and we are almost compelled to fall back on the supposition that in those years the planet's ring-system may have been larger and more conspicuous, and actually discernible by the keen-sighted in the clear skies of Chaldea. Be this as it may, we have another test in the planet Mercury, which, being never far from the sun, must always have been a difficult object, at any rate for systematic observation ; yet centuries before the Christian era it had been so clearly seen and accurately watched that the astronomers of ancient days had been able duly to place it among the planets.

On the whole we may assume that the far vision of man is much as ever it was, and its limitations are chiefly a question of atmosphere. When the air is charged with moisture, other things being

equal, it becomes more transparent, much as paper or linen becomes transparent by being wetted. In the clear intervals which commonly separate passing cyclones, or, as we have noted, between recurrent heavy showers, the far distance opens up to our view in a manner almost magical, and the common saying is near the truth that 'the farther the sight the closer the rain.'

The curious phenomenon of apparently seeing farther than the eye naturally can reach claims notice here. The cliffs of the French coast are distant some thirty miles from the town of Hastings, and, though only the surface of the sea intervenes, owing to the mere convexity of the earth, as has been stated, the French cliffs must be wholly hidden from the English side; yet we have unimpeachable testimony that, on a summer afternoon in the year 1798, a crowd of people hurried down to the beach of Hastings to witness the strange spectacle of the whole French coastline from Calais to Dieppe displayed before them, and standing as it were but a few miles to sea. This, of course, was only an unusual occurrence of a phenomenon due to refraction, which is extremely common elsewhere.

Given a perfectly still air, and, owing to the extremes of temperature, a great difference of density in low-lying strata, then at once objects will appear out of their true place, just as the end of a stick immersed in water appears bent. Thus travellers in the desert sometimes see in the mirage pools of water that are not, and Arctic voyagers have clearly before their eyes objects that are absolutely below the horizon. The explanation lies in the most commonplace statement of a fundamental law of optics, and in simple truth we all know the phenomenon perfectly, and may see it almost any day of the year. Watch the sundown, and just when the red orb rests on the sky-line, recall the fact recorded in our earliest text-books that the sun you still see so clearly, by a trick of the atmosphere, is already below the horizon.

It is very commonly supposed that the limits of vision can be indefinitely extended by artificial means, though probably there is no greater mistake. No form of telescope as yet conceived can possibly admit of indefinite enlargement. Setting aside the mere mechanical difficulty of adequately mounting telescopes of large size, other obstacles arise which are manifestly insurmountable. Thus, taking the best-known form of telescope having an object-glass, we may consider the case of the giant instrument at the Washington Observatory, whose compound glass, measuring twenty-six inches across, has necessarily a thickness of nearly three inches at its centre. Through such a thickness of glass at least one-half of the light is actually absorbed and lost. This serious diminution of transmitted light becomes, however, more apparent when we consider the further fact that if the diameter of the glass were doubled the loss of light would be quadrupled.

When, then, we pass on and find that the Washington lens has been surpassed by that of the Lick telescope, possessing an object-glass of thirty-six inches, which again in turn is now distanced by that of the Yerkes instrument, measuring no less than forty inches, one already wonders if there can with much advantage be any great advance in this direction.

When, as in reflecting telescopes, object-glasses are replaced by mirrors, the loss of light by absorption is of course obviated. Yet a worse difficulty remains, for which there seems no remedy. Though we may place our telescopes on lofty mountains under the clearest skies on earth, the disturbance of the great sea of atmosphere still overhead has yet to be settled with; and a moment's consideration will show that the larger the surface of the mirror the greater must be the disturbance introduced. For, take the analogy of disturbed water—say, a clear stream running over a pebbly bed—here and there through small still portions of the water the objects below are seen with but little distortion, but directly the eye is permitted to take in a larger view the increased disturbance is sure to be admitted; and in the case of a telescope it is enough to say that directly any perturbation is introduced the defining power of the instrument is wholly lost. Thus it is only in most favourable localities, and under exceptional atmospheric conditions, that our larger telescopes can even now be utilised with their full apertures and high powers.

In the Paris Exhibition there was a noble telescope possessing an objective of twenty-six inches in diameter and twenty-six and a half feet focal length, and in this it was hoped we would see an instrument that was unrivalled. When, however, we are told that a power of ten thousand was used upon it, and that by its means the moon could be seen as though only a mile distant, we must regard such statements as simply the grossest exaggeration.

S O N G.

SUNSET and stars and sea
All speak of thee;
Thy name's dear music seems
Heard in all rushing streams,
And in all songs the sobbing night-wind sings;
The mem'ry of thy face
Seems linked with ev'ry place
And with all lovely and mysterious things.

All life is filled, for me,
With thoughts of thee;
All glory of the sky,
All holy melody,
All noble deeds that lift the soul from sin.
Alas! within thine heart
No thought of me has part,
And to thy dreams I ne'er can enter in.

EVA D.